

The UK-MAB Urban Forum

www.ukmaburbanforum.org.uk

(Provisional) Work Programme 2009/10



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THE UK-MAB URBAN FORUM

The Urban Forum of the UK Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Committee is a network of specialists, practitioners and thinkers involved with nature conservation in urban areas. Its mission is to raise awareness, stimulate research, influence policy, improve the design and management of urban systems, and push urban biodiversity and nature conservation up the social and political agenda. Its distinctive contribution to this goal is integrated thinking. The Urban Forum tries to reflect and express these specialisms, and the many complex realities they represent. In the breadth of its agenda and the range of its membership, it is unique within the UK.

Members of the Urban Forum come from a wide variety of backgrounds from voluntary organisations to local authorities, government agencies and the private sector: from those primarily concerned with conserving “nature” – plants, wildlife, biodiversity – to those, researchers and practitioners, who work with people and deal with the human use of green space. Currently there are some 27 members who collectively contribute to the continuing reputation of the UK as a centre of excellence in this field. The networking and multi-disciplinary approach which is the hallmark of the Urban Forum is a source of new insights whose promulgation to a wider audience is seen as one of the Forum’s key roles.

The Urban Forum meets four times a year, but much of its work is done through networking and informal sub-groups. In order to maximise the contribution and commitment of its members, all of whom work in a voluntary capacity and have heavy professional workloads of their own, it sets annual work programmes with a strategic framework and realistic targets for delivery.

The Urban Forum was established as a working group in 1988. Its main work has been in publishing papers, preparing comments on national issues and policies, generating new concepts, guidelines and research, organising conferences and workshops, and networking with other expert groups. Some of its work is done in collaboration with other organisations. It also awards the UK-MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence (which includes the MAB logo) to key demonstration projects – a process that involves site visits and appraisals.

(Provisional) 2009/2010 work programme:

Core Work

Topic	Project	Leader	Targets
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Developing the Award	Gerald Dawe	Develop Award plaques. Continue review of existing Award sites.
Contributing to MAB	UK MAB committee	Pete Frost / Gerald Dawe	Ensure Forum liaises effectively with parent committee.
Urban Biosphere	Applying the Biosphere Reserve concept to urban areas	Pete Frost	To report progress from the UK on the application of the Biosphere Reserve concept to human settlements and to collaborate internationally on the achievement of target 23.1 from the UNESCO MAB Madrid Action Plan: To facilitate the integration of urban areas into Biosphere Reserves.
The Urban Forum website	Development and maintenance	Urban Forum Secretariat	To ensure the website acts as an effective means to communicate the Forum's work to interested parties
Maintaining the Urban Forum's financial security		Gerald Dawe and Secretariat	To secure sufficient funds for the Forum's core costs and ensure funds are secured to implement work programme projects.
'Diversity and Disadvantage'		Judy Ling Wong	Addressing Equal Opportunities / Women's and Minority rights within the existing work-stream.
Membership of the Urban Forum	To attract appropriate nominees to the Urban Forum	Members	To ensure that the Forum membership continues to be represented by top specialists and continues to reflect and express current thinking and the state of the art in nature conservation in urban areas.
Topic	Project	Leader	Targets

New and Current work

Topic	Project	Principal participants	Targets	Progress as at September 2009
Social Trends	To produce a Forum publication highlighting the benefits in a time of climatic change in developing uninteresting and abandoned patches of land.	Grant Luscombe, Alison Millward and Ambra Burls	To get a public statement out to politicians before the next general election. To employ a graduate student to expand the research matrix/literature review.	An initial meeting of the sub-group, with secretariat in attendance, was held on June 24 th . A first draft of the publication has been produced and circulated to members for comments. A further meeting of the sub-group is scheduled for October 20 th 2009.
Greenspace Toolbox	To develop a greenspace toolkit in conjunction with	Pete Frost, Ambra Burls,	To identify the gaps in the provision of toolkits and to identify where the	The sub-group held a workshop on May 26 th , reviewed the Forum's approach and

	CCW- an assessment tool for assessing the extent, the quality and the appropriateness of urban greenspace in a given area.	Graham Leekes and Nigel Lawson	provision of toolkits is both possible and desirable.	identified topic areas. A further meeting of the sub-group is scheduled for October 20 th 2009.
Logging system (Forum archives)	To "sort out" the Forum's archives	Alison Millward and Secretariat	To produce a history of the Forum's activities and funding and to create a library of publications by Forum members	Papers lodged with Susan Davies at University of Aberystwyth. Agreement to provide an honorarium of £300 to students involved in the project.
Handbook of Urban Ecology	Contribution of chapters by people within the Forum	Ian Douglas and David Goode	To contribute towards a new monograph of urban ecology. Cultural and ethical connections with ecology emphasised. To be sent to the publisher, Routledge, by end October 2009 for publication in August 2010.	20 chapters ready, 21 chapters prepared and edited 24 chapters still to be completed.
Human Ecology conference, University of Manchester, June 2009.	International conference with participation of UK MAB Urban Forum	Ian Douglas	Forum members to contribute a symposium.	The conference was held at University of Manchester June 29 th to July 3 rd 2009 with over 200 delegates attending daily. UK MAB Urban Forum organised a successful symposium. The Forum provided £1,000 to cover participation by their members.
Street Trees and Sustainability	To organize a one day conference to be held May/June 2010, preferably in London	Gerald Dawe	Publicise research work on Street Trees and Sustainability. The aim of the conference is to change how urban trees are managed and to influence policy and practice.	Essential task have been allocated to several Forum members.
Forum web site	To redesign and modernise the Forum's web site.	Secretariat	To produce a web site which is fit for purpose in the 21 st Century that effectively communicates the Forum's work.	The site has been redesigned and modernised and will be put in to operation in October 2009. A fee of £500 for this work has been agreed
MAB/UNESCO EUROMAB 2009 "Doing Together-Learning Together"	UK MAB Urban Forum to be represented	Ambra Burls	1. Networking: co-building a clearing house for connecting EuroMAB and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves; 2. Sharing practices and experiences: building a learning community	Funding has been made available for Ambra Burls (Deputy Chair) to attend this conference in October 2009.

Conference in Slovakia			(periodic review, ARDI methodology, zonation, etc.) 3. Implementing the EuroMAB and Madrid Action Plans: activities and strategic planning; 4. Building Partnerships: filling the gaps, demonstrating the benefits of biosphere reserves for sustainable development.	
MAB Urban Wildlife Award for Excellence	Awarding suitable sites/projects.	Graham Dawe and Secretariat. Members	To review the criteria for nomination and the assessment process. To complete the assessments of nominated sites.	The criteria for nomination and the assessment process have been reviewed and are on the Forum's web site. <i>Meanwhile Gardens</i> has been assessed and has been given the award. Assessment of the applications by <i>Roots and Shoots</i> and <i>Buglife</i> is ongoing.
Topic	Project	Principal participants	Targets	Progress as at September 2009